

Objectives of the expedition

- 1) to carry out some biological work at the high-arctic area

Report of the Dutch Natural History Expedition to N.E.-Greenland.

- 2) to study the high-arctic birds of the high-arctic area

- 3) to become acquainted with the natural part of N.E.-Greenland and to learn about their management

22nd July - 12nd August 1983.

- 4) to make a feasibility study evaluating for future tours in N.E.-Greenland.

Period

The party of 12 members flew in two airplanes from Reykjavik on 22nd July and left again 10th August 1983.

Party-members

1. A. van der Burg; 2. H. van der Burg; 3. A. van der Burg; 4. C. van der Burg; 5. E. van der Burg; 6. P. van der Burg; 7. A. van der Burg; 8. A. van der Burg; 9. A. van der Burg; 10. A. van der Burg; 11. A. van der Burg; 12. A. van der Burg.

Area

The main study area was: Lilledal, Fundal, Juvall, and Lilledal. Four members of the group walked along Long Ocean, then going by Lilledal.

Observations

This report contains the observation of birds during the period of stay near Lilledal.

A general article is in preparation. Besides the bird observations, information will be given about Lilledal and Juvall and plants.

21 September 1983,
H.D. van Bohemen,
Holterschans 11,
Nieuwegein,
The Netherlands.

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Objects of the expedition

- 1) to carry out some botanical work of the high-arctic around Mestersvig;
- 2) to carry out general survey of birds of the high-arctic around Mestersvig;
- 3) to become acquainted with the National Park of N.E.-Greenland and to learn about their management;
- 4) to make a feasibility study evaluating for future tours in N.E.- Greenland.

Period

The party of 12 members flew in two airplanes from Reykjavik on 23rd July and left again 10th August 1983.

Party-members

1. A.Kranenburg; 2. H.Verboom; 3. A.H.Berghout; 4. E.Sterenborg;
5. E.Goeman; 6. M. de Haan; 7. X.Kronenberg; 8. O.Plantema;
9. J.Tems; 10. H.D. v. Bohemen(expeditionleader); 11. N. v.d. Zwan;
- 12.E . Löffler.

Area

The main study areas were: Deltadal, Funddal, Tunnelelv, Skeldal, four members of the group walked along Kong Oscar Fjord going by Peterson Hut.

Observations

This report consists the observation of birds during our period of stay near Mestersvig.

A general article is in preparation. Besides the bird observations, information will be given about mammals(we saw 22 muskuxoxen) and plants.

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and to learn about their management

22) to carry out practical work of the high-school

Observations of birds in N.E.-Greenland 1983.

A summary by Otto Plantema, Braakpeel 1, 6034 RP Nederweert, Holland.

1. General Remarks

The observations were made during the visit to Mestersvig from 23rd July till 10th August 1983. They have been completed by information from Mr. H. v. Bohemen and Mr. H. Verboom.

We visited the tundra-area on the south bank of Kong Oscar - and the Segelsällskapet fjord bounded in the East by the melt-water river of the Sedgewickglacier and in the West by the Deltariver, as well as the valleys of Tunnelelv, Nedre Gefionelv and the Nedrefundvalley higher up (see attached map).

We saw juvenile of the long-tailed duck, the common eider, the pink-footed goose, the ptarmigan, the ringed plover and the snowbunting. We did not have the time to ascertain the hatching of the remaining waders, skuas and red-throated divers.

The snowbunting was the most common and widespread bird, followed by the ringed plover.

Long-tailed skuas were seen regularly, as well as the barnacle goose and, to a less extent, the pink-footed goose.

On arrival at Mestersvig most of the snow up to 400 metres had disappeared, the Kong Oscarfjord, on the other hand, was still covered with winter-ice.

In course of time, owing to the somewhat warmer rivers, there was more and more open water in Noret and the fjord, though the fjord was still for the greater part covered with ice when we left.

On 2nd August the Segelsällskapetfjord and the Alpefjord were completely ice-free.

The summer in Mestersvig turned out to be somewhat cooler than normal.

2. Species of birds observed, order of the species according to F.Salomonsen- Fuglene på Grønland, 1967 Rhodos, København.

1. Gavia stellata (red-throated diver)

Generally foraging in pairs and sometimes a display on open water in freshwater pools at Mestersvig (Myggesø, Rypesø, Gaasesø and little lakes south of Skelhut), Noret and the Kong Oscar and Segelsällskapetfjord.

We could not find a nest or juveniles.

2. Clangula hyemalis (long-tailed duck)

Fairly common on open water in the fjord (on 8th August a maximum of 25 specimens mainly ♂ at Skelhut) and in freshwater pools (Muggesø: 4 ♀ foraging from 29th through 31 st July).

On 10th August we saw a ♀ with 5 juveniles at Gaasesø.

3. Somateria mollissima (common eider)

Fairly common on open water in the fjord (20 ♂, ♀ at most at Peterson hut on 3rd August) and Noret (12 ♂, ♀ at most on 30 th July). At the Menanders øer we saw 4 ♀ with 3 juveniles on 7th August.

4. Anser fabalis brachyrhynchus (pink-footed goose)

On 5th August we saw two birds flying over at the foot of the Linne glacier. In the freshwater pools south of the Skelhut we counted 80 pink-footed geese, of which 35 juveniles, on 7th August.

The next day we found about 50 birds (probably the same group?) at the Skelhut in the fjord.

5. Branta leucopsis (barnacle goose)

We regularly saw small moulting groups: at Noret (about 30 individuals on 24th July and 30th July), in Skeldal (49 individuals on 8th August) and on the Alpenfjord (12 individuals on 5th August). We didn't see any juveniles.

6. Lagopus mutus (ptarmigan)

1983 turned out to be a good ptarmigan-year. We found at least 7 families with 3 to 11 juveniles. On 27th July we saw the first juveniles about one week old at the Delta river.

7. Charadrius hiaticula (ringed plover)

By far the most common wader. Regularly we saw birds crying out in alarm on the tundra and also in the valleys higher up (until about 500 metres). On 30th July we found at the Hamnahut a nest with 2 juveniles and one halfway out of its eggshell.

8. Arenaria interpres (turnstone)

In the wide surroundings of the village of Mestersvig solitary specimens or small groups were spotted, with a maximum number of 8 specimens on 8th August.

At Skeldal a turnstone, crying out in alarm, was found on 1st August, so that breeding in 1983 by the turnstone does not seem unlikely here.

9. Calidris canatus (knot)

In the surroundings of Mestersvig only small groups looking for food were found from 8th through 10th August at freshwaterpools (such as Gaasesø 5 specimens). Some birds still had breeding plumage others had already partly lost the brown breastfeathers.

10. Calidris maritima (purple sandpiper)

Together with the knot and the turnstone various small groups were spotted from 8th through 10th August (12 specimens at most).

11. Calidris alpina (dunlin)

On 29th through 31st July we found 3 pairs crying out in alarm around the Myggesø in wet, well overgrown tundra (typically dunlin biotope), so that the birds were probably breeding here.

12. Calidris alba (sanderling)

At the freshwaterpools near the settlement of Mestersvig birds were found regularly (10 specimens at most on 25th July). On some occasions sanderlings crying out in alarm were spotted in the wide surroundings of Mestersvig : It can be assumed that the birds were breeding here.

13. Stercorarius parasiticus (arctic skua)

On the tundra around the Hamnahut (30th July) and the Skelhut (1st August) we found solitary birds or groups of 3 arctic skuas at most. The birds seemed to occupy territories, but were not aggressive.

14. Stercorarius longicaudus (long-tailed skua)

Long-tailed skuas were regularly found on the tundra. On 1st August we saw 4 specimens at the Skelhut and at the messroom at Mestersvig we saw groups of 6 specimens at most.

The behaviour of most of the birds was indicative of breeding attempts being made, although we hardly saw any lemmings (principal food of the long-tailed skua in N.E.-Greenland; Salomonson, 1967).

15. Larus glaucoides (Iceland gull)

By the Rypesø on 24th July an adult was seen together with a glaucous gull. The Iceland gull is an irregular and rarely seen summerbird on N.E.-Greenland (Salomonson, 1967).

16. Larus hyperboreus (glaucous gull)

The glaucous gull was seen a few times along the fjordcoast.

At the rubbish-dump of Mestersvig we regularly saw a group of 6 specimens.

17. Sterna paradisaea (arctic stern)

Regularly small groups searching for food along the fjordcoast, especially near potential breeding places such as the Archer Øer, Menander Øer, Arwidsson Ø and the small rocky islands at the Peterson hut.

18. Corvus corax (raven)

We regularly saw one or two birds. At the rubbish-dump of Mestersvig often 2 to 3 specimens.

19. Oenanthe oenanthe (wheatear)

The wheatear was spotted once or twice around Mestersvig, the hills east of the Skeldal and in the valley of the Linne glacier.

20. Carduelis hornemanni (hornemann's redpoll)

On 27th July a single specimen was spotted at Blyklippen.

21. Plectrophenax nivalis (snowbunting)

Quite common, also in valleys higher up. During the whole period we saw young birds being fed. At our departure on 10th August we spotted the first groups of about 10 birds around Mestersvig.

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